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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
Office of Current Intelligence
16 July 1963

CURRENT INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Insurgency in Laos, South Vietnam,
and Thailand

1. Laos

a. Communist forces in Laos continue to improve their capability for an intensified military effort. As part of their psychological warfare campaign, Pathet Lao propagandists are spreading rumors of an early Communist takeover in Laos. Other Communist actions to erode the position of anti-Communist elements in the country include widespread guerrilla activity, patrolling and probing, and other forms of military pressure and intimidation. Direct military activity continues to be limited to sporadic shelling in the Plaine des Jarres region.

b. Preliminary discussions in Vientiane have not as yet been fruitful, and continued Pathet Lao intransigence casts further doubt on the desire of the Communists to reach a negotiated settlement. Prospects, therefore, are for a continuation of the de facto partition of Laos, accompanied by limited military action by the Communist forces aimed at gradually increasing their territorial holdings. Such limited action would not exclude a move to take over all of the Plaine des Jarres. Communist propaganda seems to be trying to build a pretext for such an undertaking by continuing to charge the rightists with provocative acts and violations of the Geneva accords.

2. South Vietnam

a. Viet Cong activity in early July declined to its lowest level since February, with only two confirmed company-size attacks so far this month. The pattern of attacks is unchanged, and

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government forces have shown increased ability to react swiftly and force the Viet Cong to withdraw. On 13-14 July, government troops south of Saigon engaged three Viet Cong companies with heavy losses on both sides. Some bloc equipment and ammunition captured on 11 July may have been only recently introduced. A recent Viet Cong defector claimed to be a battalion commander infiltrated from the North.

b. The resumption of public demonstrations by Buddhist leaders, who also threaten new hunger strikes and self-sacrifices, seems likely to increase tension and encourage coup plotting against the regime.

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